Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.–21. (Cancelled).

22.   (Original) A method for displaying a display item sent between first and second users of a communications system, the method comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a display item;

obscuring the clarity of the received display item;

displaying the obscured display item to the second user;

receiving input from the second user indicating a willingness to enhance the clarity of the obscured display item; and

enhancing the clarity of the obscured display item in response to the input from the second user.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein the display item is an image.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 23 wherein the image is an image chosen by the first user to represent the first user.

25.   (Original) The method of claim 23 wherein obscuring the clarity of the image comprises reducing a resolution of the image to create a poor resolution image.

26.   (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein enhancing the clarity of the obscured image comprises increasing the resolution of the poor resolution image.

27.   (Original) The method of claim 23 wherein the image is compressed to a standardized image size.

28. (Original) The method of claim 23 further comprising setting preferences for receiving images.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28 wherein setting preferences comprises presenting a graphical user interface to the second user.

30. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein receiving the image comprises receiving all image data for the image, and obscuring the clarity of the image comprises reducing the image data to less than all of the image data.

31. (Original) The method of claim 22 further comprising allowing the second user to reject the display item.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein allowing the second user to reject the display item comprises presenting a graphical user interface to the second user.

33. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein the communication system is an instant messaging system.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33 further comprising displaying an instant message concurrently with the obscured display item in a separate dialog box.

35. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium having a computer program stored thereon for displaying a display item sent between first and second users of a communication system, the computer program comprising instructions for:

receiving, from the first user, a display item;

obscuring the clarity of the received display item;

displaying the obscured display item to the second user;

receiving input from the second user indicating a willingness to enhance the clarity of the obscured display item; and

enhancing the clarity of the obscured display item in response to the input from the second user.

36. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 35 wherein the computer readable storage medium comprises a disc.

37. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 35 wherein the computer readable storage medium comprises a client device.

38. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 35 wherein the computer readable storage medium comprises a host device.

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Original) A communications apparatus for displaying a display item sent between first and second users of a communication system, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving, from the first user, a display item;

means for obscuring the clarity of the received display item;

means for displaying the obscured display item to the second user;

means for receiving input from the second user indicating a willingness to enhance the clarity of the obscured display item; and

means for enhancing the clarity of the obscured display item in response to the input from the second user.

41. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium having [[An]] an instant messaging program stored thereon that allows a second user to receive instant messages and display items from a first user, the program comprising:

a first interface element configured to obscure the clarity of a display item received from the first user and to display the obscured display item to the second user;

a second interface element configured to receive input from the second user indicating a willingness to enhance the clarity of the obscured data item; and

wherein the first interface element is configured to enhance the clarity of the obscured display item in response to the input from the second user.

42. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 41 wherein the display item is an image.

43. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the image is an image chosen by the first user to represent the first user.

44. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the first interface element is configured to obscure the clarity of the image by reducing a resolution of the image.

45. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the first interface element is configured to enhance the clarity of the obscured image by increasing the resolution of the obscured image.

46. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the image is in a standardized image size.

47. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the program receives all image data for the image and the first interface element is configured to obscure the clarity of the image by reducing the image data to less than all of the image data.

48. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 41 wherein the program further ~~comprising~~ comprises a third interface element for setting preferences for receiving display items.

49. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 41 wherein the program further ~~comprising~~ comprises a third interface element for allowing the second user to reject the display item.

50. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 41 wherein the communication system is an instant messaging system.

51. (Currently Amended) The ~~program~~ computer readable storage medium of claim 50 wherein the program further ~~comprising~~ comprises a third interface element for displaying an instant message concurrently with the obscured display item.